

106TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 2408

To authorize the President to award a gold medal on behalf of the Congress to the Navajo Code Talkers in recognition of their contributions to the Nation.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 12, 2000

Mr. BINGAMAN (for himself and Mr. INOUE) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

A BILL

To authorize the President to award a gold medal on behalf of the Congress to the Navajo Code Talkers in recognition of their contributions to the Nation.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Honoring the Navajo
5 Code Talkers Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) On December 7, 1941, the Japanese Em-
2 pire attacked Pearl Harbor and war was declared by
3 Congress the following day.

4 (2) The military code, developed by the United
5 States for transmitting messages, had been deci-
6 phered by the Japanese and a search by U.S. Intel-
7 ligence was made to develop new means to counter
8 the enemy.

9 (3) The United States government called upon
10 the Navajo Nation to support the military effort by
11 recruiting and enlisting twenty-nine (29) Navajo
12 men to serve as Marine Corps Radio Operators; the
13 number of enlistees later increased to over three-
14 hundred and fifty.

15 (4) At the time, the Navajos were second-class
16 citizens, and they were a people who were discour-
17 aged from using their own language.

18 (5) The Navajo Marine Corps Radio Operators,
19 who became known as the Navajo Code Talkers,
20 were used to develop a code using their language to
21 communicate military messages in the Pacific.

22 (6) To the enemy's frustration, the code devel-
23 oped by these Native Americans proved to be un-
24 breakable and was used extensively throughout the
25 Pacific theater.

1 (7) The Navajo language, discouraged in the
2 past, was instrumental in developing the most sig-
3 nificant and successful military code of the time. At
4 Iwo Jima alone, they passed over 800 error-free
5 messages in a 48-hour period;

6 (A) So successful, that military com-
7 manders credited the Code in saving the lives of
8 countless American soldiers and the successful
9 engagements of the U.S. in the battles of Gua-
10 dalcanal, Tarawa, Saipan, Iwo Jima, and Oki-
11 nawa;

12 (B) So successful, that some Code Talkers
13 were guarded by fellow marines whose role was
14 to kill them in case of imminent capture by the
15 enemy; and

16 (C) So successful, that the code was kept
17 secret for 23 years after the end of World War
18 II.

19 (8) Following the conclusion of World War II,
20 the U.S. Department of Defense maintained the se-
21 crecy of the Navajo code until it was declassified in
22 1968; only then did a realization of the sacrifice and
23 valor of these brave Native Americans emerge from
24 history.

1 **SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

2 (a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The President is
3 authorized to award to each of the original twenty-nine
4 Navajo Code Talkers, or a surviving family member, on
5 behalf of the Congress, a gold medal of appropriate design,
6 honoring the Navajo Code Talkers. The President is fur-
7 ther authorized to award to each man who qualified as
8 a Navajo Code Talker (MOS 642), or a surviving family
9 member, a silver medal with suitable emblems and devices.
10 These medals are to express recognition by the United
11 States of America and its citizens in honoring the Navajo
12 Code Talkers who distinguished themselves in performing
13 a unique, highly successful communications operation that
14 greatly assisted in saving countless lives and in hastening
15 the end of World War II in the Pacific.

16 (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purposes of the
17 award referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary of the
18 Treasury (in this Act referred to as the “Secretary”) shall
19 strike a gold medal with suitable emblems, devices, and
20 inscriptions, to be determined by the Secretary.

21 **SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

22 The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in
23 bronze of the gold medal struck pursuant to section 2
24 under such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe,
25 and at a price sufficient to cover the costs thereof, includ-

1 ing labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead
2 expenses, and the cost of the gold medal.

3 **SEC. 5. STATUS AS NATIONAL MEDALS.**

4 The medals struck pursuant to this Act are national
5 medals for purposes of chapter 51, of title 31, United
6 States Code.

7 **SEC. 6. FUNDING.**

8 (a) **AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS.**—There is
9 authorized to be charged against the United States Mint
10 Public Enterprise Fund an amount not to exceed \$30,000
11 to pay for the costs of the medals authorized by this Act.

12 (b) **PROCEEDS OF SALE.**—Amounts received from the
13 sale of duplicate bronze medals under section 3 shall be
14 deposited in the United States Mint Public Enterprise
15 Fund.

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